THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) and (b) No such assessment has been made.

(c) Safety standards have been specified in IS 7898-1981 specification for manually operated chaff cutter (Ist Revision) and IS 11459-1985 for power operated chaff cutter.

Crisis in the foundries due to acute shortage of pig iron

2215. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the crisis in the foundries particularly in the Northern States in the country which are facing closure affecting over 50 lakh people due to acute shortage of pig iron;

(b) if so, what is the gap between demand and supply of pig iron during 1987, 1988 and 1989 (till date);

(c) what is the quantity of pig iron imported by the canalising agencies during 1988 to meet the demand; and

(d) what steps have been taken by Government to meet the situation and also for a long-term solution to the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR) : (a) The situation of shortage in pig iron has eased on account of improvement in its supply during the current year.

(b) and (c) The demand is assessed financial year-wise.

The gap between demand and supply of pig iron and actual imports are as follows:

(Qty. in lakh tonnes)

Year	Gap bteween demand and domestic supply	Actual imports (Provisional)
1986-87	1.45	0.45
1987-88	2.94	0.34
1988-89	3.97	1.66

Imports in these years were less then the gap primarily because of the high landed cost. The quantum of imports went up in 1988-89 on account of reduction in import duty.

(d) (i)SAIL has been asked to increase production of pig iron though it is not financially attractive for SAIL to do so;

(ii) Customs duty on import of pig iron has been reduced to bring down the landed cost;

(iii) Foreign exchange provision has been made for import of pig iron to augment domestic availability; and

(iv) Visakhapatnam Steel Plant would start production of pig iron during the year.

Assessment of poverty areas and prosperity areas

2216. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made to find out the ratio of workers to population in the rural and urban areas and the areas considered to be poverty areas and prosperity areas;